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## Tragic Death Focuses National Health Reform

The death in Townsville of a man with mental illness this week highlights the need for national mental health reform.

Federal Health Minister Nicola Roxon last night announced the Federal Government will take responsibility for community mental health as part of the national health reform agenda.

“If funding were available for community mental health responses, this man may never have met such a tragic end in hospital” said Jeff Cheverton, CEO of the Queensland Alliance, peak body for the mental health community sector.

“There is an urgent need for greater community-based services to enable people – including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – to access services close to where they live, and services that are welcoming and culturally appropriate.”

Hospitals should be the service of last resort, police and ambulance should not be the frontline of mental health service delivery.

“I hope Premiers will accept the Federal Government’s offer on Monday to take responsibility for funding community mental health, and deliver greater mental health assistance to people in their own homes and communities. There have been too many deaths as a result of inadequate mental health services. The time for reform is now,” Mr Cheverton said.

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